NELLY WILLIAMS;
OR,
Love on the Ocean.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL,
Author of "The Mutiny; or, Perils of the Deep."

CHAPTER I.

BURMARSH.

I have spent some tolerably dismal and sorrowful days in my life, as this story will explain, though I wish I could say that they were all contained in it; but the saddest day that ever my eyes opened upon was a Wednesday in June, in 1858. It was not that my shore-going holiday was about to end; though it is true that for more than three whole months I had not clapped eyes on a ship, and that in a day I was to exchange the fine summer country, the lying in bed all night, the milk and fresh butter, the going and coming as I pleased, with no man to say "sir" to, and no master but my own sweet will, for a week's hard work in the West India Docks, and then a voyage that was likely to last above a year.

But this was not the worst part. Going to sea is nothing to a man who has only the shore to leave and no clinging hands to tear himself away from. But now had come something else; and on this June morning, when I awoke, my heart lay in me as heavy as a deep-sea lead, and mortal man never shaved a gloomier face than the one that glowered upon me from the looking-glass as I turned to and lathered myself. For the truth was that I, William Lee, *ætat* twenty-three, was not only in love, but engaged to be married.

She was an orphan, just as I was. Her father, who had been a naval officer and a cousin of my mother, had died and left her three thousand pounds, and her guardian was Mr. Paul Johnson, once a lawyer, but at this time a common-councilman of the borough of Burmarsh, a town in which he had dwelt upward of fifty years. He was a good-hearted man at bottom, but had a bad opinion of his fellows, and liked to be thought cynical. I believe he was hated by the people he sat among at the Town Council meetings, partly because of his mulish trick of voting out of spite, and partly because nearly every week he wrote letters to the local apers, criticising and sneering at the Corporation.

The old councillor had been at school with my father, and they had been good friends in after-life. When I had come home from a voyage to China, and found my mother dead and the old house let, Mr. Johnson came to look for me, and bade me make his house my home, which I did whenever it suited me to do so; and here it was that I found Helen Williams—whom I shall call Nelly in this narrative, as that is the familiar name to me—when I landed after the voyage immediately preceding the disastrous one of which this book is the record.

I fell in love with her the moment I saw her, for men are always in a hurry in these matters, and sailors especially, who pass months without seeing a woman. It took her some time to find out what she thought about me, and she wouldn't have done it then if I had not given her a hand, as I may say, and helped her in every way I knew. Her father had only been dead six months, and her grief still hung like a kind of darkness over her; but after awhile her love met mine, as the tide of a calm sea comes up the shore with little runnings and a kind of purr, and a glancing backward and forward, as you shall have seen it, though the forward movement is the steady one and the stronger.

Until just a week before I went away to sea on my seventh voyage, I think it was—that being my first trip as second mate, which I ought to feel ashamed to own, though even in those days berths in the merchant-service were as hard to find as whales in the English Channel—I took her for a walk down the river, and there—for it was in the summer time—as she stood watching the trout jump and the swallows skimming the water, and the lazy cows beyond chaw, chaw, chawing like a lot of old sailors mumbling their quids, I took her hand in mine and we just told our love to each other in plain words.

I went away loving her; and whenever I had a chance to send a letter home it was to her; and I came back loving her. On the very evening of the day of my arrival – no chance having offered before, and she and I being alone—I drew forth a ring and put it on her finger. She kissed me as I did so, as though this was a ceremony that needed a consecration of that kind; and God knows she was right. Her kiss made me feel how greatly she loved me. It was the leaping up of her heart that was overjoyed I had returned safe, after the long separation and the daily prayers and fears.

Our devotion made the people of the place talk about us, for in Burmarsh you could not cross a road without some one seeing you and making news of it; and that is the case still, I hear, though the population has nearly doubled since those times.

But now had come the last day. To-morrow I was to go to London to join my ship as second mate still, though I held a chief-mate's certificate, and on that day week the Waldershare was to sail.

Councilor Johnson's house was in the High Street, a little way above the town, and about a stone's-throw from the Wesleyan Chapel, which was then newly built. It was above a hundred and fifty years old, with a great garden behind stuffed full of fruit trees—his pears were the finest in the county—and another garden in front stuffed full of flowers. It was like a perfumer's shop, with its smells of lavender, rose, violet, and such things; and I have often stood at the open window and made a regular job of sniffing, thinking to myself I had best make the most of these smells while I had them, for I should be going back to bilge-water and the aroma of boiled salt pork presently. This morning I was slow in shaving and dressing myself; for I was constantly dropping into thought, and starting out of it to find my hands idle and my eyes fixed, with a sort of mist over them, on the beaming garden below, where the flowers stood so thickly that the place was like a huge nosegay, and where the butterflies were cruising about like bits of paper blown here and there, and where the bees were booming with the sound of deep-toned men humming the responses in church. My window was wide open, and the whole beauty of this glorious morning came into it.

I was about to quit the window, and the room, too, when, very greatly to my surprise, I heard Nelly singing in the garden; and, screwing my head round the looking-glass to get a sight of her, sure enough there she was, with a big pair of scissors in her hand, cutting flowers, her head hidden in a wide straw hat.

Presently I heard the councilor's daughter, Phœbe, call out to her, "Is Will down yet, Helen? Breakfast will be ready in a few moments." On which Nelly made a movement; but before she could look up at my window, I had got sternway on me, for I had no mind just then to let her know that I had been watching and listening to her.

"Will, are you in your room?" she called out; but I gave her no answer.

I could not understand her singing and picking flowers and going about with her happy airs that morning. Though it might be all forced, it was still no good; for I was miserable enough myself, and felt that she ought to be more miserable than I. Then, being now dressed, I went down stairs.

Phœbe Johnson was in the breakfast-room, playing with a kitten in the sunshine that lay upon the carpet, and that streamed in through the open glass door or French window which led into the garden where Nelly was picking flowers. The councilor had not yet made his appearance. Phœbe was a broad-backed, deep-bosomed woman about thirty years old, with a pretty face and red hair. She did as much for her father as three generations of women could have done; she was not only his daughter, but she quarreled with him as viciously as if she had been his wife, and molly-coddled him as if she had been his mother, and corrected him to his face, and boasted about him behind his back, as if she had been his grandmother. I used to be rather fond of kissing this girl when I first knew her, and I think she liked it, and there was a time when I believed I was in love with her; but I ceased to have any nonsense with her after I met Nelly, and she let me go with as little concern as she would a cat that sprung from her lap after she had been nursing it a bit.

"Good-morning, Phib," said I, for that was my name for her. "I'm glad to think that Nelly can sing this morning. For my part, I feel as sorrowful as a bear floating out to sea on a piece of ice." As I said this, I glanced in the direction of my sweetheart, who had gone some little distance away, and was at her work with her scissors over a bed of mignonette.

"And why shouldn't she sing, my sweetest William?" replied Phœbe, with an air of exasperating indifference. "The longer she can carry her cheerfulness the shorter time she will have to fret over your absence, my dear."

"True," said I; "but still, this is my last morning but one. Half an hour later to-morrow morning I shall be saying good-by, outward bound, my darling, a whole year and more away; and though I am glad to hear her singing," said I, scowling in my effort to keep to windward of my vexation and wonder, "yet I can't help thinking it would be more natual—I am speaking of her as my sweetheart, ducky—if she showed the same sort of colors I'm flying I don't want her to cry—to pipe her eye, Phib, but—not a word more, if you please. Here she comes."

Phib laughed, and pitched the kitten on to a sofa and went to the other end of the room as Nelly came in. Her hat, which was as big as a plantation-overseer's, kept me clear of her face when I stepped up to her, though I never made any scruple of kissing her morning and night before Phib and her father. She put the flowers upon the table and took off her hat, looking at me wistfully, as though she guessed some of my thoughts.

She was a woman, I think, every man would have admired; of the right height, her figure graceful and beautiful, and so active, strong, and lovely in its movements that, I used to tell her, with a little training, she would be a match for the most expert of the theatrical flying women—the people who walk on ropes and hang by their eyelids to ceilings. She had magnificent hair, "an excellent thing in woman," a sort of bronzed brown (to give you some notion of it); and I never knew how much she had of it before one morning when I accidentally plumped up against her as she was crossing from her own to Phib's bedroom, with her hair all loose, and covering her like a sea-wave. She plunged away from me under it with a glorious free movement, but shut Phib's door so quickly upon herself that the hind part of her hair, streaming out as she ran, got jammed, and I had to open the door to free her. Her gray eyes and low forehead and little ears, with a lovely curve down the cheek to a throat as soft and white as the breast of a rabbit, were things I have never yet seen matched; and though her mouth might have been a wee bit large, it was full of little white teeth, and every kiss— But this is parish talk.

"Will doesn't like to hear you singing, my dear," sung out Phib, quietly. "Men never know what they ought to like, do they, Nelly?"

Well, thought I, that's the truth anyhow. But neither Nelly nor I appeared to take notice of the remark; she smiled a little, and looked at me quickly—indeed, her manner was altogether puzzling.

The old councilor now came in, and we sat down to breakfast. He was a dried-up old man, with a dusty face, and he wore a white hat all the year round, as well as colored linen; so he had other pretentions to local fame than those which grew out of his town-councilorship and his acidulated letters to the papers. He was generally garrulous at meal-times, and between him and his daughter the stiffest arguments would rage. This morning, however, the councilor was unusually silent; I believe my going had something to do with it. Phib asked me what made me so dull—a mere excuse to tell her father that I had been annoyed to hear Nell singing in the garden.

"Look hear, my dear," said I, "enough's as good as a feast. Don't you overtalk yourself sometimes? Perhaps I am fretting because I have to leave you."

"You were once sweethearts, weren't you?" said Nelly, demurely.

"Would you like to take me with you, Will?" asked Phib. "What would you do with me on board a ship?"

"Perhaps make a figure-head of you," I answered; "and very fine you'd look."

"You have made up your mind not to run down and see us before you sail, Will?" said the councilor.

"Why, Mr. Johnson, I think it's best to make one good-by do for all. Hand-shaking and God-bless-you-ing is no joke to a fellow when he's leaving what he loves—perhaps forever," said I, feeling a lump in my throat. Here Nelly put a spoon into her cup and peered into it close.

"I hope we *shall* meet again, my boy," said the old man, gloomily; "though a year is a longer time for me to look ahead than it is for you, who have nearly forty years to serve to come to my age. And though you are going to sea, which is reckoned by us people ashore but a perilous life at the best, I don't suppose there's a man living who would not bet heavily on the chances of your coming back to look at the old place once more, as against the chances of my being alive to welcome you."

He seemed really affected, and Phib was now looking as grave as a nun at her prayers. Nell, with her cheek in her hand—like a peach in the cup of a lily—gazed at the old councilor wistfully; there *was* a tear in her eye, but it was as puzzling to me as all the rest of her conduct, for she seemed to be thinking more of Mr. Johnson than of me—if, indeed, she was thinking of me at all.

Nelly did not sing again that day—at least I didn't catch her singing; but neither during the morning nor in the afternoon did she give me half as much of her company as I wanted. She seemed to have made a lover of old Johnson, for she kept on making excuses to be with him, and her manner to him was so gentle and loving and sad, that I never saw the like of it before in her. It was too hot all that day to leave the house, but when the sun was low, and the hush and softness of the early evening had fallen, I asked Nelly to come with me for a row on the river, "for the last time;" and without a word she went for her hat, passed her hand through my arm, and we walked slowly down the lanes to the old boat-house.

There were a couple of boats lying alongside the banks of the river. We got into one of them, and the man that owned her cast us adrift, and I rowed for about half a mile, until we were well in the country away from the town, when I threw one oar inboard, and took the other aft, with which I steered the boat, through the aftermost rowlock, with a light movement of my wrist almost unnoticed by myself. By this means I kept the boat in mid-stream, and we drifted down with the current, which ran here at about half a mile an hour, while I sat closely against my sweetheart in the stern-sheets.

It was a calm and beautiful evening; the sun was gone now, but all the sky was ablaze in the west, and the moon was in the south ready to throw its light down when the crimson had faded. All about the river lay quite open to the sky, the fields flat, and the country treeless, though half an hour's steady rowing would have brought us to some lovely scenes.

We sat as sweethearts should, both together; my right arm was around her waist, and with the other hand I held the oar. She, the better to sit close to me, removed her hat, and, as she often laid her head on my shoulder, and had her ear close to my mouth, we conversed in such low voices that we should have been inaudible to any person sitting forward in the boat. I believe she felt that something in her manner was wanting, and she tried to mend it by caresses; but, though her sadness at times equalled mine, I felt, as I had been made to feel throughout the day, that its inspiration was not altogether owing to me. I noticed tears in her eyes when we were speaking of Phœbe and the councilor, and she owned that it made her cry to think of them.

"But why, Nelly, do you cry for *them*?" I asked. "Is any thing going to happen? One would think that *they* were going away to sea."

"I am a silly girl, Will," she answered, drying her eyes; and she took my hand in both hers and pressed it passionately to her breast, and immediately buried her face and sobbed bitterly for some moments. I kissed her once or twice, but let her have her cry out without offering to speak.

"A year is a long time to look forward to, Nelly, but a short time to look back upon. It seems but yesterday that I said good-by to you when I went away on my last voyage."

"Yes, it will pass, Will; and I hope God will spare us both, darling, to witness the end of it, and be together safe."

"Ay, we must hope that indeed, and pray for it too. But I shall leave you full of brave hopes. I am pretty sure of getting a chief-mate's berth next voyage, and we shall marry upon it, Nelly, and make an end of this waiting." And I talked again of the schemes we had repeated to each other, and got her to smile; but this cheering her up was desperate hard work to me, who was the more miserable of the two, as I now know. I gave it up at last for fear of breaking down altogether, and chucked the oars into the rowlocks, and rowed away back to the boat-house. We exchanged but few words: my heart was too full for speech; it gave me pain to articulate; and Nelly sat quite still, with her gaze fixed on the water, and sometimes, when the bend of the river brought the moon broad upon her, I could see the tears sparkling in her eyes. Anon we reached the landing-stage; I lifted her out of the boat, and we walked slowly in the direction of home.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN THE RIVER.

The Waldershare was a full-rigged ship of eight hundred and fifty tons, but looked smaller than this figure of her tonnage suggests. When I first saw her she was in dock, lying close against the wall, her decks forward covered with raffle, and a litter of dirt and goods amidships, and yet she looked, with only the run of her bulwarks visible, and her beautifully rounded stern, and her top-gallant forecastle narrowing like the bows of a yacht, with the same clever curve and gradual sweep which talks of speed to the eye, the handsomest vessel of her kind then in the docks, and a ship for a sailor to love as he would a sweetheart. She was coppered to the bends, and painted green fore and aft, with a narrow white streak; her stern was eliptical, and in the graceful bend of it was a broad gilt scroll, in the midst of which was written her name and that of her port in small white letters. Her figure-head was a gilt dolphin, the tail flemish-coiled, and it overhung a stem as sharp as a knife, sweeping out and around in real racing lines. She was heavily sparred—too heavily, I always thought; her lower masts were as bright as mahogany, and the sun streaked them with fire; her fore and main yards were huge spars, and promised an immense spread of canvas; she carried single top-sails, and reefs in the fore and main top-gallant sails, and short royal mast-heads, which, with her heavy tops, gave her a man-of-war look.

The tide serving at half-past two, we got clear of the docks at that hour on Thursday, the 26th of June, 1858. The day was a bright one and hot enough, with a fresh breeze blowing straight up the river. The ship was now in very different trim from that she had been in when I boarded her a week before. Her decks were as white as holy-stoning could bring them: the brass-work just made them a broad glare of light in the brilliant sunshine; aloft every bunt was as smooth as a pillow, all the running gear hauled taut, the standing rigging like wire, and the whole ship a beautiful picture.

Now that we were out of the docks there was little to be done; there were two hands at the wheel, and most of the men forward on the forecastle watching the shore as it slipped past us. This going down the river is the most melancholy part of the voyage out to men who make any trouble of leaving home. The scenes which one passes are so familiar, that, as one by one they drop astern or vanish round the bends of the river a new wrench is given to the heart.

The grandeur of the Thames lies in its wealth of human interests; yet as a river it is one of the noblest, and if it flowed any where but in England, Englishmen would never be weary of praising it. I had passed up and down it many times before, but though there was much to cloud my mind and dull the edge of enjoyment, it had never more impressed me nor filled me with greater pride than on this day. The sunshine was broad and searching, and all the various colors of the scene were extremely vivid and the contrasts very sharp. Off Woolwich seemed to me the finest part of this gay show, for just at this point a great number of passing vessels came by chance together, and the river was covered by a whole fleet of ships big and little, amid which some steamers plied cautiously, sometimes backing and then forging ahead, while from one vessel to another shouts were re-echoed, and yards were boxed about, and the men went springing here and there like kangaroos.

It was generally understood that we were to bring up off Gravesend in order to ship a few passengers. When Gravesend hove in sight orders were given to see the chain cable all clear for running, and when we were abreast of the town the tug let fall our tow-rope; and after we had swum a few minutes the anchor was let go, the cable roared through the hawse-hole, and the ship swung with her stern down the river. So here we were holding on tight again to English ground.

The captain went ashore, the river pilot and the custom-house officers going along with him, and the ship was left in the charge of the chief officer. The decks were soon cleared, every thing made snug and ready, an anchor watch set, and the hands went below. My share of the work being done, I came aft, where I found the chief mate—a little red-haired Welshman, Thomas by name, the smallest man I was ever shipmates with. He had little quick blue eyes, which played in their sockets like a ball on the top of a jet of water, a bush of red hair under his chin, and long red eyebrows which he could have soaped into points, had he chosen, as a Frenchman does his mustache. He was a regular little nautical dandy, but by this time I had got used to his appearance and was well disposed to like him, for I could see that he had immediately taken a fancy to me, and though I had not as yet had any opportunity of judging him as a seaman, I had found him very smart and sensible in dock. He told me he had a captain's certificate, but could not get a berth; this was his second voyage as chief mate of the Waldershare, but his first with Captain Flanders, the man who now commanded her.

I found him gazing gloomily at the shore, in which occupation I was quite ready to join him. Mr. Thomas was sitting on the aftermost skylight, his little feet well above the deck, and was rubbing his nose down with a sad look on his little face.

"Well, Mr. Lee, here we are, sir," he said; "old England broad on both beams, though the old hooker ought to be going the road she's pointing to please me. I hope it may be well with us all, Mr. Lee; though, dame, sir, no man could have the cheek to pray for a better ship under him than the Waldershare; I never heard of such a run as she has. Follow the curve of her to the eyes, sir: she's like a dream—something too fine for mortal hands." He pointed forward with his chin, like a negro, still rubbing his nose.

"Ay, she's a beauty, Mr. Thomas; but, as you say, she's bound the wrong way, and lovely as she is, I'd rather be aboard of that old Geordie there who's making a fair wind of it home."

"And so would I, Mr. Lee—more than you, perhaps; for I dare say your hankering is only after a few knockabout pleasures. But I'm leaving a wife, and a wife is a solemn thing to leave for a spell, long or short."

"I am with you there, sir," said I, with a warmth that made him lift his eyes to my face.

"Why, are *you* married?" he inquired.

I told him I was not, but that I was as good as married, for that my sweetheart and I were pledged to each other, and if she was not yet my wife in the law, she was so in my love, and that parting from her this time was the cruelest necessity that had ever been forced upon me since I was old enough to recollect.

He listened attentively, rubbing his nose all the time, and then exclaimed, "Well, I suppose I'm not the only man who has to leave his wife. I dare say, now, there are a dozen fellows forward who are leaving wives, and children too. I've only been married a month, and marriage when it's fresh is like a new cement, that makes the pieces united pretty hard to come apart, though in time, faith, they'll fall of themselves." He coughed dryly, and burying his hands in his pockets, said, "But I've let her snug enough, in three good rooms with brand new furniture, and all my savings, ever since I went to sea, in her name at the bank. She has her sister to keep her company,, and as time flies more quickly than people reckon who count forrards, I don't know that there is much to blubber over."

So saying, he jerked himself on to the deck as though he had done with that subject. I spoke to him about Captain Flanders, and asked if he knew any thing about him.

"Not very much," he answered. "Only I can tell you what an old shipmate of mine told me when he heard that Captain Flanders was appointed to the Waldershare—though, mind, I don't believe it—that there is madness in his family on his father's side; that his father hung himself; and one of his brothers, who was in the Church, used to make nothing of changing his clothes with a beggar in the public street in broad daylight, shifting himself down to his very breeks, and that he dropped preaching at last because he thought the devil always got into the pulpit with him: but what became of him my friend didn't tell me. I can't say whether there's much religion in the skipper or not. He has a rather monkish eye. I hear he got command of this ship through the influence of the gentleman to whom she originally belonged. It should have been my post by rights," he said, bitterly, beginning to pace the deck.

We stamped the length of the poop together for a half hour, talking on the prospects of the voyage, the time it would take us, our several experiences of doubling the Horn, Callao (to which port we were bound direct), and so forth. By this time most of the men had come on deck again, and were clustered on the forecastle. I believe the size of the chief mate amused them, for I caught them looking our way pretty often with a broad grin; but Mr. Thomas took no notice—indeed, in all the time I was thrown with him, I never discovered that he had the least sense of his smallness, or fancied himself other than of a stout and prepossessing figure. My own height was not above five feet nine, yet I felt myself a giant alongside of him; and for every stride of mine he had to take four, so that his little feet, cased in varnished leather boots, regularly twinkled as he walked. However, in this half hour I found him an honest, simple, manly little fellow, with clear, sharp views and a brisk capacity of words, candid to excess, and a man who had been to sea a long while and sailed in many kinds of ships. This was a very good beginning. To be associated with a mate I could like, and who was evidently willing to leave it to me to distinguish and appreciate the difference between our relative posts, was a great gain to me; and if the skipper was only half as good a fellow as his chief mate, the voyage would be a comfortable one, so far as the work aft was concerned.

Such of the crew as were visible looked promising enough, as they sat smoking on the forecastle or leaned upon the rail, gazing at the shore or the ships which lay at anchor near us. They were, of course, a mixed body, and the negro, conspicuous with his red shirt, broad grin, and bland eyes, was not wanting among them, you may be sure; there were also several Danes, Norwegians and Americans—these latter very active rascals—and two or three south-countrymen, Italianos, and a sprinkling of black-browed scow banks from Mediterranean ports; but the English preponderated, and, on the whole, we had a good and plentiful crew.

Our cargo consisted chiefly of hardware, railway metals, brass, iron, and other metal goods; a heavy cargo, which might give the ship a little too much stability by making her too deep. The Waldershare was not a passenger ship, that is, a liner; but she had accommodation for a dozen cuddy passengers, and three of her cabins were let, and the luggage of the people in them, and the people were to be on board next day. I did not know who the passengers were, nor their names, but Mr. Thomas said that two of them were women. I told him I regretted that there were any passengers at all, as they generally gave a good deal of trouble, were always about, and were a kind of hinderance to the freedom of the cuddy. Mr. Thomas agreed with me, though, as a sea dandy, I dare say he was not sorry in his heart that there were to be women among us to admire his little feet and pretty clothes.

After dinner I went on deck again, carrying my pipe with me, and left Mr. Thomas below. I was not sorry to be quit of him for a spell; he had more to say about his wife and home arrangements than interested me, and I wanted to think over what I was leaving, and to be alone for a bit. I perched myself on a hen-coop, and lighted my pipe and looked around me.

The wind had dropped, and the current had swung the ship with her head up the river. The sun was setting over the port bow, and Gravesend lay red in its light; the windows burning, and the whole town looked massive and heavy in the glow which magnified it. This red light was on the river, too, veining the masts of the vessels at anchor with lances of fire, and filling the air with a purple haze, amid which every rope glanced with the glint of a spider's web, while the canvas lay upon the black yards as though a storm of snow had fallen and lined them, and the brass work was filled with ruby-colored stars; and the glass in the port-holes notched cones of quivering light in the running water, that grew dark as it swept broadening down the river, and gradually glassing its surface as the wind grew fainter with the sinking of the sun, until there was not a breath of air perceptible even to the moistened finger; and the sounds from the shore came floating through the motionless atmosphere with a muffled tone, with the rattle of a winch on board a near ship, or the wail of a concertina, and the gurgling of the tide as it chattered round the rudder just under me, and went twisting in little holes away, giving to the eye the idea that we were moving.

Gravesend was a galaxy of lights, but the shores on either side of it and across the river stretched away silent and pale, and the moon and fret of the current under the counter made the imagination find the flat and ashen land very desolate and sad-looking. There were voices singing in some of the ships around us, and here a fiddle was scraping and there a concertina turning up: our own ship and the big black Yankee next us were the only silent ones, but ours being outward bound would account for the quietness of the men. Many of them still hung about the forecastle, and some few talked in low voices in the waist; a light in the boatswain's berth on the port side of the forecastle streamed across the deck, and illuminated the lower part of the foremast, and threw into relief the huge spare booms piled atop of the long-boat, and the range of chain cable and coils of running rigging; but on either side this light the darkness was profound, for the high bulwark intercepted the moonlight and threw a deep shadow.

All this while my mind was running on my sweetheart, and at one time so heavy a fit of depression came over me that I could scarcely contain myself, and was almost thankful when Mr. Thomas came on deck and joined me, as his presence obliged me to act a part, and so I gradually rallied. We lingered on deck until the steward came to say that the grog was on the cuddy table, after which I went the rounds of the ship to see that all was right, and then turned in.

[Continued next week.]

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THE HUSBAND AT HOME.

BY NANCY J. BROWN.

The amount of good advice given annually to woman in regard to her work, her influence, her deportment, and her performance of duty, is something amazing to contemplate. Volumes of it have been written and printed for the benefit of girls, of wives, and of mothers. Not until a woman has fairly reached the age and dignity of a grandmother is she free from well-meant hints as to her opportunities, her education, and her responsibility.

Certainly the mother wields an immense power. She may be said almost to form her children, for she has the beginning of life under her hand, and while yet they are in the cradle she impresses them for good or ill; but the father, not less than the mother, is responsible for the training his children receives. They are his as well as hers. If they grow up in honor, in candor, in uprightness, and in the fear of God, he as well as she has a right to be thankful and to take the credit. His qualities and characteristics are transmitted as surely as hers to the sons and daughters of both. Not more distinctly are face and form like father and mother, often curiously interblended, so that the child bears a likeness to both parents. Then are temperaments, talents and dispositions derived from both, so that no father can be justified if he throws off the entire burden of his children's training upon their mother. He should set them a right example, and sustain her gentle authority by his own, equally gentle but on the right side, firm and unyielding.

We have always heard a great deal about the wife's duty to meet her husband with a smile when he comes home tired at night. Of course she should be bright and cheerful, if she can. So should he, if he can. It is quite as much his duty to lift the latch and enter his own door gaily, pleasantly and cheerfully, as it is hers to receive him amiably. It is a pretty hard matter to smile on a man who shuts the door with a bang, sits down with a gloomy brow, and worries if dinner be five minutes late, as though there had been an infraction of law that could never be condoned. A wife may be as beautiful as a Madonna, as graceful as a vine, as fair as a lily, as sweet as a violet, but neither sweetness, nor grace, nor beauty shall suffice her in the eyes of a man who has woven into the warp and woof of his nature the baneful idea that he is master and governor; that his convenience is the first thing to be considered; and that the house, the children, and general economy of life are to be planned, carried on, and regulated solely with a view to his comfort and convenience. These are thought of and planned for in every happy home; but when he is a kind, loving husband, lover-like in little acts of compliment and courtesy to her who has trusted her life in his hands, a tender, sympathizing, benignant father to his children, he gets more happiness than when he demands attention as a tribute.

There are men—we have seen them—whose bearing towards their business associates and friends are unexceptionable. They are charming companions. They are liberal, gallant and courteous, so far as the outside world goes; but in their own homes you would not recognize them for the same beings. Morose, tyrannical, ill tempered, sarcastic, they are the terror of the wives and children unfortunately dependent upon them. Such husbands ironically criticise their wives in the presence of company, reprove them for some trifling mistake as though it were a crime, and manage to give the feeling of the Day of Judgment to the household the whole time they stay in it. When you hear the little people hushing their play timidly because papa has come home, you may be sure that all is not well in that home.

A genial, sunny-tempered, kindly-mannered gentleman wins all hearts wherever he goes. He leaves a benediction in his own house. His presence is like the sunshine. His wife's face is full of rest, and his children's delight expresses itself in every look and motion when he returns to them after an absence. "Our Father who art in Heaven" is interpreted far more quickly and significantly by children that have an earthly father who illustrates tenderness and patience every day in dealing with them.

Mutual forbearance, mutual regard, and demonstrated love, should be the rule in every home. No home is happy where father and mother are not something more than partners bound together by common domestic interests. They must love each other deeply, unselfishly and responsively; and if that love be consecrated by the upward looking of both to Christ, then they will be happy and the children under their care will learn loving ways in the atmosphere they breathe.

Husbands and wives sometimes allow coolness and indifferenc and estrangement of the heart to come between them, not so much by what they do as by what they leave undone. They forget to say pleasant things and neglect to give praise where it is due, and they drop sentiment out of life as though it were something to be ashamed of; anniversaries are neglected; little, delicate and beautiful attentions are omitted; the two bound together for life are less solicitous for each others comfort than they are for that of strangers; pride forbids either to admit that life has been a disappointment; they would not own—and in this they are right—even to their nearest and dearest friends that there is bitterness in their souls; indifference has taken the place of what was once eager and true affection; there is love *yet*, but it is smouldering under such a heap of ashes that it is in danger of becoming utterly extinguished, never to be revived.

Oftener, we think, are husbands to blame than wives for this sad state of things. They have embarked in the world's business or ambition, erected sordid idols in their hearts and insensibly they have forgotten that the women whom they tried so hard to win, and whom they proudly wore at first like jewels beyond rubies, are starving for lack of little expressive tendernesses. I would say to both husbands and wives: Speak kind words to each other, set a good example before your friends and your children, and never forget that in entering the marriage state you consecrated your lives to the exercise of mutual love forever, and there will no longer be necessity for written and printed advice to you.

Written for THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

SOMETHING ABOUT HORSE-SHOEING.

BY GEORGE P. PAUL.

Horse-shoeing is a subject that needs more study than is given it, as a general thing, and in order to draw the attention of the readers of your excellent paper to this article, I will write in the form of a dialogue.

Customer.—Mr. Paul, why do you take so much pains in shaping the heel and calk of your shoe?

Answer.—Because by doing so I can get a better fit.

Customer.—Why do you spend so much time in smoothing your shoes with the hammer, as I see that no one else takes the pains that you do?

Answer.—My reasons are numerous. I will try to give you some of them. A horse can't talk, and to please him in his shoe requires a great deal of study, and to give him a shapeless and rough job would not please him; and the only way he has to tell you that the job don't suit him is in his movements and actions, such as stumbling; striking his ankles; lame, with fever in his feet; stands drawn up, and shows in many ways that all is not right with him. When he comes to me in this fix, and I go to work and take off those rough and shapeless shoes and put some on that are exactly the shape of his feet, and he is taken out on the road, you can easily see the difference in his movements. All the pains I take are necessary in order to have your horse in a good fix, so far as his feet are concerned. You should clean them out every morning, and grease them with salty grease once a week—especially if they are brittle and the frog dry, which is caused by

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